

CLEVER BIRD TRICK.

The Wood Nightjar Has a Way of Openly Concealing Itself.

In his book "A Naturalist in the Outlines" Eugene Andre tells of the tricky manner in which one bird fools the hunters. He says:

"The wood nightjar is a difficult bird to detect during the day. He chooses for perching some mottled stump or branch so closely resembling his plumage that he appears to form part of the bough upon which he is sitting. I suppose that in my wanderings I must have passed quite close to a good many of these large nightjars, yet I must confess that only on one occasion did I get a good opportunity of observing the habits of this bird."

"We had had a morning's duck shooting and were resting in the shade of one of the mangrove trees which line the creeks, when what had appeared to me to be a dry stump jutting out of one of the branches seemed to move slightly. I threw lumps of clay and bits of stick at it, but it did not move until it was actually struck, when, to our surprise, a wood nightjar flitted a short distance away, alighting on a stump similar to the one which he had left a moment before. He immediately flattened his tail against his perch and assumed an attitude which gave him all the appearance of being part of the stump on which he rested."

"I disturbed him repeatedly, and he invariably followed the same tactics. He always chose as resting places stumps or branches which his plumage resembled, and he took a position so suggestive of a piece of wood that I should certainly have passed him by had I not been watching his movements and seen him alight."

A DEAL IN STOCKS.

Comment of the Man Who Witnessed the Quick Transaction.

Sitting at his desk on the tenth floor of a Wall street building the man in charge of the investment department of a Stock Exchange house was discussing the bond market with a visitor. A message from the telephone room was laid upon his desk. "Pardon me," he said to his visitor as he picked up his telephone instrument and asked for a Philadelphia connection. He immediately replaced the receiver, and the discussion of the bond market was resumed. The telephone bell rang. "Pardon me," said the investment expert again as he lifted the telephone instrument. "I'll take those fifty shares," he said into the telephone.

Evidently he got them. He broke off the connection, wrote a message for the wire and sent it off to the telephone room by a boy. The discussion of the bond market was resumed once more and continued until another message came from the wire room. The investment expert merely glanced at it and went on with the conversation.

His visitor broke in to ask a question. "Do you mind telling me the nature of that transaction you have just concluded?" "Just then?" said the investment expert. "Why, I bought fifty shares of an investment stock in Philadelphia by telephone and sold them in Columbus, O., by our private telephone wire. What about it?" "Oh, nothing," said the visitor, "only it occurred to me that a few years ago it might have taken four weeks instead of four minutes to do it." Then they went on with their talk about the bond market.—New York Post.

His Preference.

A distinguished eye surgeon tells a good story of his hospital days. Three other young, newly fledged oculists, and himself were chatting in their quarters in the hospital when the conversation turned, as was natural in young men, upon the beauty of different colors of eyes. One championed the superior brilliancy and sparkle of the blue eye, another the depth and fire of the brown, while the third was all for the clear, cool light of the hazel. After they had exhausted their eloquence, with the usual effect of confirming themselves in their original opinions, the fourth young sawbones suddenly broke in: "I don't care a hang about your blue eyes or your brown eyes or your gray eyes! Just give me sore eyes and plenty of 'em, and I'll be happy."—Saturday Evening Post.

London's First Directory.

How did the world do its business before the publication of directories? The huge directory of London had a first printed forerunner in a slim little volume, "A Collection of the Names of the Merchants Living in and Around the City of London," issued by Samuel Lee of Lombard street in 1677. It was the outcome most probably of the enterprise of Henry Robinson, a well known writer on commercial matters, who in 1650 opened an office in Threadneedle street, where were kept "particular registers of all manner of addresses" for the use of all who cared to pay a shilling.—London Chronicle.

Why the Romans Decreased.

The visiting member of the board of education was examining a class in history, and of one of the brightest pupils he asked the question, "Why did the population of Rome decrease just before the fall of the empire?"

The reply came promptly from a little girl, "Because the Romans had ceased to practice husbandry."

Wrong Kind of Forgetting.

"Don't Mr. Briggs and his wife ever forget their differences? He—Why, yes, in a way. He forgets that he is a gentleman and she forgets that she is a lady."—Boston Transcript.

He conquers who awaits the end and dares to suffer and be strong.—Lewis Morris.

SPARE TIME TO LAUGH.

Brooding Over Your Worries Won't Lighten the Burden.

It is the duty of mankind, even in depressing circumstances, to strive to be cheerful. It is the general belief that if a man is not naturally light hearted he cannot make himself so.

Yet this is far from being the case, and there is many a man who is at present a weary burden to his relatives, miserable through the carking care of some bodily ailment perhaps or some worldly misfortune, who, if he had grown up with the idea that to be cheerful in all circumstances was one of the first duties of life, might still see a pleasant enough world round him.

The worries of a morose person will shorten his days, and the general justice of nature's arrangement provides that his early departure should entail no long regrets.

On the other hand, the man who can laugh keeps his health. To the perfectly healthy laughter comes often. Too commonly, though, as childhood is left behind, the habit falls, and a half smile is the most that visits the thought lined mouth of a modern man or woman. People become more and more burdened with the accumulations of knowledge and with the weighty responsibilities of life, but they should still spare time to laugh.—Detroit Free Press.

SEED GERMINATION.

In Some Cases the Development Is Remarkably Rapid.

It has been said that the seed of the globe turnip when growing increases its own weight fifteen times within a minute. The seed of this turnip is exceedingly minute, being not larger than the twentieth part of an inch in diameter, and yet in the course of a few months the seed will be developed by the soil into twenty-seven millions of times the bulk of the original, and in addition to a considerable bunch of leaves.

On peat ground turnips have been found to increase by growth 15,990 times the weight of their seed each day they stood.

The fungus offer an instance of remarkably rapid growth. The great puff ball will attain the size of a pumpkin in a single night, and Lindley calculated that the cells whereof it is composed will multiply at the rate of 60,000,000 a minute.

Many seeds germinate in a very short period—the cress in two days; spinach, turnips and kidney beans in three days, lettuce in four, melons and gourds in five, most of the grain seed in a week and hyssop at the end of a month. But others remain for a very long period without showing signs of germination.—New York Herald.

An Eye Arrestor.

In this day of catch words and slogans, once in a while a roving eye will chance upon a phrase that sticks. Going down in a Broadway car the other day two tired looking men sat side by side, glancing disinterestedly out of the window opposite as the car sped past the signs in the wholesale dry goods district. All at once the gaze of both men focused at a certain point and they turned their heads to read the sign in full. On the door of one of the wholesale millinery houses was this legend: "Come in without knowing, but don't go out the same way." The eyes of both men met as they finished reading it, whereupon each smiled a bit. "Not such bad advice, that," said one, and his neighbor grunted approvingly.—New York Press.

Friday Dickens' Lucky Day.

Charles Dickens was not one of those who are superstitious concerning Friday. It was on Friday that many of the good things came to him, and it was on that day that he entered upon, paid the price and took possession of Gadshill, the one thing he cherished more than all of his other possessions. It was Gadshill that he had gazed upon when a wee bit of a boy with a hope, then giving little signs of fruition, that he might live to own it some day, and it was Gadshill whose walls he covered with mirrors in almost oriental magnificence.—Boston Record.

Unbalanced.

"What's the charge against this man?" asked the judge.

"We desire, your honor," replied the lawyer in the case, "to have him tried for insanity. His family is greatly worried about him."

"What has he done?"

"He has sold his automobile for the purpose of raising money with which to pay an honest debt."—Chicago Record-Herald.

The Fly in the Ointment.

"I don't think I'll go to any more of my wife's parties," said Mr. Cumrox.

"Don't you enjoy yourself?"

"Yes. Only some one always mistakes me for one of the guests and starts in making remarks about how I made my money."—Washington Star.

Comfort.

Mr. Flubdub—You women are mighty slow. During the time it took you to select that hat I went out and made \$200. Mrs. Flubdub—I'm so glad, dear. You'll need it!—Puck.

Learning.

Learning maketh young men temperate, is the comfort of old age, standing for wealth with poverty and serving as an ornament to riches.—Cicero.

"Cut glass for company and chipped china for the family" is not the best of rules for making a home attractive.

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FIGHTING THE RATEL.

This South African Badger Has a Grip Like a Bulldog.

There is a curious long nosed little creature of South Africa called the ratel, which is said to exhibit a most peculiar method of fighting its human adversaries. The son of a Britisher in South Africa who was using for the first time a shotgun had what hardly could be called an amusing experience with a ratel.

The boy saw the ratel creeping round an ant hill. He cantered off at a not very rapid pace, and the boy fired at easy range. The animal turned heels over head, much in the same manner that a tame squirrel will disport itself in a wheel cage. The ratel paused once, as if in pain, but never took his eyes off the boy. The lad did not think of running, but clubbed his gun and stood, prepared to meet a spring.

It happened that the English boy had never been told how the ratel fights. Almost every boy in the veldt knows, but this lad did not. To wait thus, expecting a leap breast high, is to give the ratel exactly the chance he wants. Hesitating not a second, the ratel glided swiftly in and seized the lad's feet. The boy backed him with the butt end of his gun, kicked at him, shouted his loudest, but the ratel gnawed away with the pertinacity of a bulldog. At every blow the creature's teeth closed like a vise. The boy seized his long tail, wrenched and twisted it, but the ratel would not quit his hold.

The struggle lasted for a shorter time than it takes to tell it. The muscles of the lad's instep were cut through, and he tumbled backward—not at full length, but against an ant hill. This circumstance probably saved his life.

The ratel let go, as it does when its victim drops, to spring upon the lad's throat and rip his stomach with its hind claws. But the plucky boy lifted himself upon his elbows and lay across the summit of the mound. That might only have prolonged the struggle, but his father ran up at the moment. The boy was many months in bed and many more on crutches.—New York Press.

"HANG THE PRISONERS!"

An Exclamation That Was Put into Effect as an Order.

The young laird of Lochnow was a character in the Scotch camp life of the early eighteenth century. He was cool in action and full of fun in daily life. One day he was detailed to command a burial party, and as he strolled over the battlefield his orderly came to him in great perplexity.

"Sir," said he, "there is a heap of fellows lying out yonder who say they're only wounded, and they won't let us bury them like the rest. What shall we do?"

"Bury them at once," replied young Agnew without moving a muscle of his countenance, "for if you take their word for it they won't be dead for a hundred years to come."

The man saluted and started off in all simplicity to carry out the order, and Agnew had to dispatch a counter-order in haste to prevent his joke from becoming a tragedy.

This recalls an "o'er true" tale of border life. Some Galloway moss troopers were brought before Sir William Howard, who was an enthusiastic mathematician. He was deep in his studies when the prisoners were marched into the castle courtyard, and a lieutenant came running up to get orders as to their disposal. Enraged at being interrupted, he cried, "Hang the prisoners!" and went on with his work.

He finished his problem and went down with a cheerful mind only to learn that his exclamation had been taken for an order, and the prisoners were all hanged.

The Time to Do the Counting.

In the old days of impetuous warfare caution was not regarded as so much a virtue on the part of a military commander as at present. In a battle between French and Austrians, in which Marshal Bugeaud commanded the French forces, an officer of the staff said to the marshal: "The enemy are advancing. Shall I send a party to reconnoiter and see how numerous they are?" "No," said Bugeaud; "we'll count 'em after we've beaten 'em."

Reading.

Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me instead under every variety of circumstances and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life and a shield against ill, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading.—Sir John Herschel.

Its Nature.

"Borely is a nuisance. No matter when you meet him, he wants to talk about his fine stamp collection."

"Don't blame him for that, my boy. As a rule stamps are things which are naturally on the tip of every one's tongue."—Baltimore American.

The Mule.

"Kicking is bad policy. Behold the mule. Kicking never gets him anywhere."

"That is exactly why the mule kicks."

"Eh?"

"He doesn't want to get anywhere."

—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Storms of Life.

The noblest characters are those who have steered the life saving vessel through storm tossed seas. A bed of down never nurtured a great soldier yet.

It is success to lose the approval of fools.—Kural.

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